



SHELTER IN PLACE



During a chemical emergency, public safety officials may instruct you to "shelter in place" instead of evacuating. Sheltering in place offers you and your family immediate protection for a short time in your own home until it is safe to go outside or evacuate. Below are the steps you should take to prepare your home and what to do when instructed to shelter in place:

BEFORE

- Have your [disaster supplies kit and evacuation pack](#) ready. Add to it:
 - Duct tape
 - Plastic sheeting pre-cut to the size of your window, door, and vent openings
 - Battery-powered radio and extra batteries
- Select a room in your house that has few or no windows as your place to shelter. The room should be above ground (i.e. not the basement). If possible, the room should have also a telephone, although you should use it only for emergency calls.



DURING

- Immediately take your children and pets indoors to the room you've chosen as a shelter. Take your disaster supplies kit with you. If your children are at school, do not leave your house to go get them. Going outside could expose yourself to hazardous chemicals. Schools have emergency plans of their own.
- Close and lock all windows and doors in your home. Locking them makes a better seal. Close off non-essential rooms such as storage areas, laundry rooms and extra bedrooms.
- Turn off all fans, heating, and air conditioning systems that draw in air from the outside. If you have a fireplace, close the damper. The goal is to slow down the "air exchange" in the house.

- If you are told there is danger of explosion, close the window shades, blinds or curtains. To avoid injury, stay away from the windows.
- Once in your chosen shelter room, cover any windows, doors, exhaust fans, heat registers, outlets, and vents with plastic sheeting and duct tape. Seal the small openings in the wall where pipes come into the room, and other cracks with duct tape.
- Turn on a radio or television to a local station that broadcasts emergency information. Stay tuned until the "all clear" message is broadcast. Stay off the phone! Emergency responders will need the phone lines. Call 9-1-1 if there is an injury or other immediate emergency to report. Do not call 9-1-1 for information.
- Be prepared to evacuate if ordered to do so by public safety officials.

AFTER

- If public safety officials order an [evacuation](#), immediately do as instructed. Take your evacuation pack with you.
- If you are not instructed to evacuate after you hear the "all clear" message, you should open up the house to speed up the "air exchange" to get rid of any chemicals that may have seeped in:
 - Remove the plastic sheeting and tape.
 - Open doors and windows.
 - Turn on your heating/cooling system to ventilate the house.
 - Go outside.

RELATED PUBLICATIONS

- [Chemical Emergencies](#)
by the American Red Cross
About chemical accidents and how to be prepared.
- [Residential Shelter-In-Place Student Guide](#) (PDF format)
by Oak Ridge National Laboratory
What is meant by shelter-in-place, why shelter-in-place works in fastmoving plumes, how to enhance the protection afforded by sheltering, and the steps residents should implement when the shelter-in-place advisory is over. This document is intended to accompany the Residential Shelter-In-Place video, but is still useful because it includes the text of the video.
- [Bee Prepared! Do You Know What to Do in a Chemical Emergency?](#)
by the City of Corpus Christi and Nueces County Local Emergency Planning

Committee

Information about chemical emergencies including, evacuation, shelter in place, and risks.

- [Model Shelter-in-Place Plan for Businesses](#) (PDF format)
by the National Institute for Chemical Studies

A model plan to help you craft a shelter-in-place program for your office building.
(You will need the free [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#) to view)

[Hazards in Austin](#) — [Before A Disaster](#)

[During A Disaster](#) — [After A Disaster](#)

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